



# Forestry and Fire Section

FORESTRY AND FIRE

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022 Staff

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## 2022 Highlights

- ◆ 100 acre fuels reduction contract completed on the Caribou-Sherwood property
- ◆ Rehab, pruning, and seeding to mitigate impacts from mechanical operations at Caribou-Sherwood performed by the Boulder County Youth Corps
- ◆ Awarded COSWAP-LRI grant, which will increase the pace and scale of cross-boundary forest restoration in the St. Vrain Watershed
- ◆ Collected more than 200 pounds of limber pine and ponderosa pine cones from five open space properties
- ◆ Completed 21 acres of prescribed fire at Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain
- ◆ Burned 48 piles at Mud Lake to complete work on the Wild Bear project
- ◆ Produced 352 tons of chips at our Community Forestry Sort Yards for use in our biomass heating facilities



## Phase 1: St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership Project (COSWAP-LRI)



The project is part of the St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership, which is a collaborative of agencies and community members working to increase the pace and scale of cross-boundary forest restoration in the St. Vrain Watershed. Projects selected provide critical linkages between existing burn footprints and treatments on federal, county, city, and private lands. Specific cross-boundary projects are described below:

Cook Mountain (132 acres) implementation project offers good anchor points for future prescribed burns conducted on United States Forest Service (USFS) land within Research Natural Area zone of St. Vrain and connects with existing USFS and City of Longmont treatments.



COSWAP map with project areas

North Shore Project (22 acres) will function as a fuels-reduction project for adjacent residential properties, as well as mitigating future post-fire sedimentation in Ralph Price Reservoir.

Boulder County Hall Ranch and Antelope Park Projects (98 acres) will mitigate future post-fire sedimentation in Longmont Reservoir, Longmont’s primary domestic water intake.

Eagle Ridge Project (130 acres) links the recent burn footprint in Lyons to a critical fire suppression boundary for the town of Lyons. The north-south orientation of this project, coupled with being a ridgetop, is ideal for a shaded fuelbreak.

### Caribou Ranch-Sherwood Gulch Fuels Reduction Project

The Caribou Ranch/Sherwood Gulch Fuels Reduction Project proposed management action as recommended in the Caribou Ranch Management Plan (2002). BCPOS was awarded funding in 2019 through the CSFS State Fire Assistance (SFA)-WUI Grant. General objectives for the 100 acres were:

- ◆ Reduce overstory density (horizontal continuity), decrease crown fire potential
- ◆ Remove ladder fuels (vertical continuity), maintain surface fire
- ◆ Create a mosaic structure of individuals, clumps, and openings
- ◆ Create/maintain a diversity of age class, size class, and species
- ◆ Maintain/expand existing openings and meadows

Contractor operations were successfully completed in late March. We were fortunate to have ideal winter harvesting conditions with abundant snowpack and frozen ground. Operating in these ideal conditions allowed us to greatly minimize site/surface disturbance. In excess of 1,150 tons of logs were produced, which will, in turn, be converted to chips for our biomass heating plants.



# Forestry Operations



Hazard tree felling at Heil Valley Ranch Overland Loop

Our operations crew continued Cal-Wood post-fire rehabilitation efforts at Heil Ranch, as well as general hazard tree removals.

- ◆ Hazard tree felling along 2.7 miles of the HVR Overland Loop trail
- ◆ Hazard tree removals at Heil Ranch, Mud Lake, and Heatherwood Open Space trailheads
- ◆ Assistance with Heil Ranch tree seedling plantings and fence rebuilding
- ◆ 45 tons of fire-burned logs hauled for the Mountain Ridge Subdivision



Water tanks staged for tree planting at Heil Ranch



Limber pine cone harvesting at Cardinal Millsite



Fencing at Caribou-Sherwood to deter off-road use

Final touches were completed on the Caribou-Sherwood contracted forestry work.

- ◆ Two-acre forest treatment along the Caribou Ranch trail and trailhead
- ◆ Pruning, rehabilitation, paint removal, and fencing within treated units
- ◆ Mapping of 357 slash piles for later burning

Our limber pine conservation program and pine seed collection efforts are now well under way.

- ◆ 11 bushels of limber pine cones collected from three open space properties
- ◆ 80,000+ total limber pine seeds extracted by hand to date
- ◆ Established four new limber pine long-term monitoring plots, bringing our total number of these plots to 20



Limber pine cone harvest from Cardinal Millsite

# Forest & Fire Planning



Trees marked for removal at Sherwood Gulch

2022 ended up being an abnormal year. There were no seasonal workers in the Planning group. As a result not a lot of inventories were completed. Instead, staff focused on assisting other programs in the Forestry and Fire group. The sort yards also had a hard time finding seasonals so several shifts had to be covered by Planning staff. The summer was spent keeping ahead of the Sherriff's Office (SO) Fire Crew, with marking trees for their cutting project at Sherwood Gulch and overseeing multiple research projects on several properties.



Prescribed fire briefing at Rabbit Mountain



Prescribed fire operations at Rabbit Mountain

- ◆ 48 piles burned
- ◆ 12,100 feet of ditch burned
- ◆ 21 acres on the Arapaho Rx project
- ◆ Project prep and layout of 15 acres for the SO Fire Crew to cut at Sherwood Gulch
- ◆ 2 new PRFs for pile burning at Caribou Ranch were approved by the ID Team
- ◆ Oversaw 6 research projects at various properties



Slash pile burning at Caribou-Sherwood

Despite the small work force, the Planning group was able to get some things done. In the winter, with the assistance of the SO Fire Crew, all the piles at the Wild Bear project adjacent to Mud Lake were burned. As the snow started to disappear our focus shifted to ditch burning. We were successful, again with the help of the SO Fire Crew, in burning several ditches on multiple burn days. In the late summer we were able to burn 21 acres on the Arapaho Rx fire project at Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain. The year was closed out with the completion of two new PRFs for pile burning at Caribou Ranch and Sherwood Gulch.



Slash pile burning at Caribou/Sherwood

# Community Forestry Sort Yards

The Community Forestry Sort Yard (CFSY) program is now in its fifteenth year. In 2022 there were 179 operational days. The Nederland CFSY was open from May 4 through Oct. 22, and the Meeker Park CFSY was open from June 1 through Oct. 15.

The total load count for 2022 was 8,874 loads, the second highest load count for a season. There were 423 new property locations in 2022 (213 from Meeker Park and 210 from Nederland). In total, there were 1,979 different property locations, with an average of 4.5 loads per property.

Yard	Slash Tons	Wood Tons	Chip Tons	Yard Debris Tons
Nederland	475	157	76	77
Meeker Park	624	93	107	191
<b>Totals</b>	1099	250	183	268

In addition to woody biomass material, we have been collecting yard debris (both pine needles and noxious weeds) at our sort yards for the past eight years. Pine needle removal from the home ignition zone is an important part of maintaining good defensible space. These collections have increased yearly and are a popular use of the sort yards.

Education and outreach are a large part of the program. Unfortunately, there were no Wildfire Awareness Days at either yard because there was no seasonal staffing. We were able to continue a monthly newsletter, handout brochures, and managed a twitter account.



View looking west from the Meeker Park



Opening Day at the Nederland CFSY



CFSY staff hanging Ips traps for the season



Nederland's resident moose (shown left), and CFSY collected pine needles and cones (shown right).



# Public Participation & Engagement

## Volunteer Projects

- ◆ 7 volunteer projects
- ◆ 99 volunteers contributed a total of 307 hours of service
- ◆ Thinned two acres of lodgepole pine regeneration at Reynolds Ranch
- ◆ Constructed 27 slash piles at Reynolds Ranch
- ◆ Replaced 400 linear feet of worm fence at Heil Valley Ranch

## Holiday Trees

- ◆ 30 holiday trees were harvested and handed out to various county offices
- ◆ 50 holiday trees harvested for low-income families in Boulder County
- ◆ Public holiday tree sale on Dec. 3 and 4:
  - 100 holiday permits issued
  - More than 300 people attended the event over a two day period.
- ◆ Held first annual San Lazaro tree-cutting event at Reynolds Ranch



Can'd Aid helps rebuild fences at Heil Ranch



Forestry staff greeting holiday tree participants





**Resource Management**

**Forestry and Fire**

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